

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 SAJ-01 DRC-01 /138 W

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R 301732Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8412

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

USMISSION BERLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BONN 15713

E.O. 11652

TAGS: PFOR, GW

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH CDU/CSU PARTY LEADER HELMUT  
KOHL

SUMMARY: IN A FRANK LUNCHEON CONVERSATION IN MAINZ ON  
OCTOBER 29, CDU/CSU PARTY CHAIRMAN HELMUT KOHL GAVE THE  
AMBASSADOR HIS VIEWS ON THE CURRENT GERMAN POLITICAL  
SCENE AND THE FUTURE PROSPECTS OF HIS PARTY. HE FEELS  
THAT TIME IS ON THE SIDE OF THE CDU/CSU, PROVIDED THAT  
HIS EFFORTS TO GIVE THE PARTY A SOMEWHAT MORE LIBERAL  
SLANT SUCCEED. END SUMMARY

1. ALTHOUGH THIS IS NOT THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM IN  
GERMANY AT THE PRESENT TIME, KOHL SAID THAT HE FELT THAT  
CURRENT PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL TRENDS ACTUALLY FAVORED  
THE LONG-TERM PROSPECTS OF THE CDU/CSU. DESPITE THE  
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PROBLEMS WHICH THE JUSOS AND OTHER RADICAL ELEMENTS

AMONG THE YOUTH WERE CREATING, A CONSERVATIVE WAVE AMONG THE MAJORITY OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE -PARTICULARLY AT THE GYMNASIUM LEVEL - WAS NOW CLEARLY DISCERNIBLE. BY THE 1976 ELECTIONS, HE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF THE WORD "PATRIOTISM" DID NOT AGAIN PLAY A ROLE. THIS TREND, HE EMPHASIZED, SHOULD NOT BE CONFUSED WITH A RETURN TO TRADITIONAL GERMAN NATIONALISM. GERMAN YOUTH HAD TO BE GIVEN IDEALS BEYOND THE SATISFACTION OF CONSUMER WANTS IN A WEALTHY SOCIETY SUCH AS THAT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC, AND HIS EFFORTS WOULD BE DIRECTED TOWARDS BUILDING ON THE SOLID, BUT NOW SOMEWHAT OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC BASE, A MORE LIBERAL AND OUTGOING PARTY WHICH WOULD HAVE GREATER POPULAR APPEAL FOR THE NEW GENERATION.

2. HE WOULD BE ASSISTED IN THIS PROCESS, HE FELT, BY THE MISTAKES OF THE SPD LEADERSHIP AND THE POLARIZATION WHICH WAS GOING ON WITHIN THE PARTY. IT SEEMED CLEAR THAT THE LEFT WING WOULD GRADUALLY TAKE OVER THE SPD, DESPITE THE EFFORTS OF BRANDT TO STRADDLE AND OF MODERATE RIGHT WING LEADERS SUCH AS LEBER TO PREVENT RADICALIZATION OF THE PARTY. THIS WOULD INEVITABLY, IN TIME, ALIENATE THE FDP TO THE POINT WHERE THAT PARTY WOULD AGAIN BE WILLING TO JOIN THE CDU/CSU AS A COALITION PARTNER IN FORMING A GOVERNMENT. THE NATURE OF THE GERMAN POLITICAL SCENE WAS SUCH TODAY, KOHL SAID, THAT EVEN UNDER THE BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES IT WAS HARDLY POSSIBLE TO ENVISAGE ANY ONE PARTY'S OBTAINING AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY WITHIN THE BUNDESTAG IN 1976. A MAJOR FACTOR IN KEEPING THE SPD/FDP TOGETHER WAS THE CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WHICH HAD DEVELOPED BETWEEN CHANCELLOR BRANDT AND FOREIGN MINISTER SCHEEL AS WELL AS BETWEEN SPD PARLIAMENTARY LEADER WEHNER AND FDP PARLIAMENTARY LEADER MISCHNIK.

3. REVIEWING THE 1972 ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN, KOHL LISTED A NUMBER OF ERRORS MADE BY HIS PARTY. THE PRIME MISTAKE, HOWEVER, WAS HAVING FORCED THE ELECTIONS OF 1972 BY REFUSING TO ACCEPT THE GOVERNMENT BUDGET. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN FAR BETTER TO WAIT FOR THE NORMAL ELECTION OF 1973, CONFIDENTIAL

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BY WHICH TIME THE WEAKNESSES OF THE GOVERNMENT IN INTERNAL MATTERS, WHICH HAVE BECOME APPARENT IN THE PAST SIX MONTHS, WOULD HAVE WORKED TO THE ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPOSITION. KOHL CITED RECENT POLLS INDICATING THAT THE CDU WAS RUNNING WELL AHEAD OF THE SPD (47 PERCENT TO 40 PERCENT WITH 10 PERCENT FOR THE FDP) AS EVIDENCE OF THE TREND IN FAVOR OF THE CDU.

4. LOOKING AHEAD, KOHL SAID HE WAS NOT AT ALL CERTAIN WHO WOULD BE CDU:CSU CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE IN 1976, ALTHOUGH LOGICALLY IT SHOULD BE THE PARTY LEADER. HE WAS STILL A RELATIVELY YOUNG MAN (HE WOULD ONLY BE 45 IN 1976) AND COULD AFFORD TO WAIT A WHILE LONGER IF THE GOOD OF THE PARTY REQUIRED IT. THE IMPORTANT THING WAS TO CONDUCT THE CAMPAIGN IN 1976 NOT ONLY IN TERMS OF WINNING THE ELECTIONS BUT ALSO IN TERMS OF BEING ABLE HILLENBRAND

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BONN 15713

TO FORM A GOVERNMENT, IF IT SHOULD COME TO THAT, WHICH COULD SUCCESSFULLY GOVERN AND INSURE VICTORY IN 1980.

5. AS TO THE DEPOSED CDU/CSU PARTY LEADER RAINER BARZEL, KOHL WENT ON TO SAY, HE WAS OBVIOUSLY BITTER AND STILL THINKING IN TERMS OF A COMEBACK. THIS WAS A MISTAKE, IN KOHL'S VIEW. WHAT BARZEL SHOULD THINK IN TERMS OF IS REMAINING AN INFLUENTIAL MEMBER OF THE

PARTY SO THAT WHEN THE CDU/CSU TOOK OVER THE GOVERNMENT HE COULD BECOME ONE OF THE SENIOR CABINET MEMBERS, BUT THIS DID NOT SEEM TO BE WHAT BARZEL HAD IN MIND. ONE POSSIBILITY BEING CONSIDERED WAS TO HAVE BARZEL APPOINTED FOR A FEW YEARS AS ONE OF THE GERMAN COMMISSIONERS IN THE EEC IN BRUSSELS, PROVIDED THAT THE SPD WAS WILLING TO RETURN TO THE OLD TRADITION ESTABLISHED BY ADENAUER OF HAVING ONE OF THE COMMISSIONERS REPRESENT THE OPPOSITION IN GERMANY. THIS WOULD GIVE BARZEL THE

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FINANCIAL SECURITY WHICH HE NEEDS AND ENABLE HIM TO OVERCOME HIS PERSONAL BITTERNESS BEFORE A POSSIBLE RE-ENTRY INTO THE GERMAN POLITICAL SCENE ALONG THE MORE MODEST LINES SUGGESTED BY KOHL.

COMMENT: FROM HIS POSITION AS MINISTER-PRESIDENT OF THE RHEINLAND-PFALZ, KOHL OBVIOUSLY FEELS A LITTLE OUT OF THE MAIN STREAM OF GERMAN NATIONAL AFFAIRS, ALTHOUGH HE IS NOW IN BONN AT LEAST TWICE A WEEK. HE IS, HOWEVER, UNDOUBTEDLY ONE OF THE CLEVEREST POLITICIANS PRACTICING IN GERMANY TODAY, AND HIS PROGRAM FOR REVITALIZING THE CDU/CSU, IF IT SUCCEEDS, COULD WELL ACHIEVE THAT RETURN TO POWER WHICH THE PARTY DESIRES. HE IS CLOSER TO THE GERMAN GRASS ROOTS THAN MOST POLITICIANS IN BONN AND HIS OBSERVATIONS ON POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL TRENDS ARE THEREFORE OF SOME INTEREST.

HILLENBRAND

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